

Remarks/Arguments

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's indication that Claims 7-9, 16 and 23 contained allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In a telephone conversation with the Examiner on 9/21/2006, the Examiner clarified that on pages 8-9 of the Office Action, the 2nd paragraph under item number 7 (beginning on page 8 with "The applied reference..." and ending on page 9 with "See MPEP § 706.02(I)(1) and § 706.02(I)(2).") was inadvertently added; and on page 10 of the Office Action, the 2nd paragraph under item number 8 (beginning with "The applied reference..." and ending with "See MPEP § 706.02(I)(1) and § 706.02(I)(2).") was also inadvertently added.

By way of the present amendment, Applicants have amended the specification to correct inadvertent typographical errors and amended the Abstract as suggested by the Examiner. No new matter has been introduced by way of these amendments. Further, Applicants have also amended Claims 1, 5-6, 8-9, 13, 21 and 24; canceled Claims 4, 7, 10-12, 14-20, 23 and 25-26; and added Claim 27-39. Twenty-four (24) claims remain pending in the application: Claims 1-3, 5-6, 8-9, 13, 21-22, 24 and 27-39, of which Claims 1, 8, 9, 13 and 21 are independent. Applicants respectfully requests reconsideration of the pending claims, in view of the amendments above and comments below.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected independent Claims 1-3, 10-15, 17-21 and 24-26 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Crosby et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,532,930). The Examiner also rejected Claims 1-3, 10, 13-15, 17-21 and 24-26 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Faltys et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,626,629).

Independent Claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter of original Claim 4 and the allowable subject matter found in original Claim 7, which claims have been canceled. Claim 8 has been rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim, Claim 1, and the intervening claim, Claim 4. Likewise, Claim 9 has been rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim, Claim 1, and the intervening

claim, Claim 4. Because the allowable subject matter from original Claims 7, 8 and 9 is now found in amended Claims 1, 8 and 9, it is submitted that Claims 1, 8 and 9, and those claims that depend therefrom, should be patentable for, *inter alia*, at least the same reasons that original claims 7, 8 and 9 were found by the Examiner to contain allowable subject matter.

Independent Claim 13 has been amended to include the subject matter of original Claims 14 and 15 and the allowable subject matter found in original Claim 16, which claims have been canceled. Because the allowable subject matter from original Claim 16 is now found in amended Claim 13, it is submitted that Claim 13 and those claims that depend therefrom, should be patentable for, *inter alia*, at least the same reasons that original Claim 16 was found by the Examiner to contain allowable subject matter.

Independent Claim 21 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter found in original Claim 23, which claim has been canceled. Because the allowable subject matter from original Claim 23 is now found in amended Claim 21, it is submitted that Claim 21 and those claims that depend therefrom, should be patentable for, *inter alia*, at least the same reasons that original Claim 23 was found by the Examiner to contain allowable subject matter.

In addition to the cancellation of Claims 4, 7, 14-16 and 23, as referenced above, Claims 10-12, 17-20 and 25-26 have also been canceled.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejected Claims 4-6 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious (unpatentable) over Crosby et al. (U.S. Patent No.4,532,930) in view of Applicants' Admission of Prior Art (hereinafter referred to as Admission). The Examiner also rejected Claims 4-6 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious (unpatentable) over Faltys et al. (U.S. Patent No.5,626,629) in view of Admission.

As stated above Claim 4 has been canceled and its subject matter has been incorporated into independent Claims 1, 8 and 9. Claims 5 and 6 directly depend from Claim 1. As stated above, the allowable subject matter from original Claim 7 is now found in amended Claim 1. Thus, it is submitted that Claims 5 and 6 should be patentable for, *inter alia*, at least the same reasons that original Claim 7 was found by the Examiner to contain allowable subject matter.

As stated above Claim 23 has been canceled and its subject matter has been incorporated into independent Claim 21. Claim 22 directly depends from Claim 21. As stated above, the allowable subject matter from original Claim 23 is now found in amended Claim 21. Thus, it is submitted that Claim 22, should be patentable for, *inter alia*, at least the same reasons that original Claim 23 was found by the Examiner to contain allowable subject matter.

Newly Added Claims

By way of the present amendment, thirteen (13) new claims have been added. No new matter has been added by way of these amendments.

- New Claims 27-30 depend from Claim 8. Claim 8 includes, *inter alia*, allowable subject matter as indicated by the Examiner.
- New Claims 31-34 depend from Claim 9. Claim 9 includes, *inter alia*, allowable subject matter as indicated by the Examiner.
- New Claims 35-39 depend directly or indirectly from Claim 13. Claim 13 includes, *inter alia*, allowable subject matter from Claim 16 as indicated by the Examiner.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the rejections have been overcome and that the pending claims are in condition for allowance. An indication of allowability of Claims 1-3, 5-6, 8-9, 13, 21-22, 24 and 27-39 at an early date is thus earnestly solicited.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned, Victoria A. Poissant, should any issues remain after consideration and entry of this response, in order to permit early resolution of such issues.

Respectfully Submitted,

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